

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Coast Guard**

[USCG-1998-4271]

Application for Recertification of Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council**AGENCY:** Coast guard, DOT.**ACTION:** Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard announces the availability of the application for recertification submitted by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council (PWSRCAC) for September 1, 1998, through August 31, 1999. Under the Oil Terminal and Oil Tanker Environmental Oversight and Monitoring Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2732), the Coast guard may certify, on an annual basis, an alternative voluntary advisory group in lieu of Regional Citizens' Advisory Councils for Prince William Sound.

DATES: Comments must reach the Docket Management Facility on or before September 21, 1998.

ADDRESSES: You may mail your comments to the Docket Management Facility. (USCG-1998-4271), U.S. Department of Transportation, room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington DC 20590-0001, or deliver them to room PL-401 on the Plaza level of the Nassif Building at the same address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The Docket Management Facility maintains the public docket for this recertification process. Comments regarding recertification, and documents as indicated in this preamble, will become part of this docket and will be available for inspection or copying at room PL-401 on the Plaza level of the Nassif Building at the same address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. You may also access this docket on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

A copy of the application is also available for inspection at the prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council's Offices, at 750 W. 2nd Ave., Suite 100, Anchorage, Alaska, 99502 or 154 Fairbanks Dr., P.O. Box 3089, Valdez, Alaska, 99686, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The telephone number is (907) 277-7222 in Anchorage, Alaska and (907) 835-5957 in Valdez, Alaska.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general information regarding the PWSRCAC contact LT Pittman, Marine

Safety and Environmental Protection Directorate, Office of Response, (G-MOR-1), (202) 267-0426. For questions on viewing, or submitting material to, the docket, contact Dorothy Walker, Chief, Dockets, Department of Transportation, telephone 202-366-9329.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Request for Comments**

The Coast Guard encourages interested persons to submit written data, views, or arguments. It solicits comments from interested groups including oil terminal facility owners and operators, owners and operators of crude oil tankers calling at terminal facilities, and fishing, aquacultural, recreational and environmental citizens groups, concerning the recertification application of PWSRCAC. Persons submitting comments should include their names and addresses, identify this rulemaking (USCG-1998-XXXX) and the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and give the reason for each comment. Please submit two copies of all comments and attachments in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. Persons wanting acknowledgment of receipt of comments should enclose stamped, self-addressed postcards or envelopes.

The Coast Guard will consider all comments received during the comment period. It may change this recertification application or application process in view of the comments.

The Coast Guard plans no public hearing. Persons may request a public hearing by writing to the docket Management Facility at the address under ADDRESSES. The request should include the reasons why a hearing would be beneficial. If it determines that the opportunity for oral presentations will aid this recertification process, the Coast guard will hold a public hearing at a time and place announced by a later notice in the **Federal Register**.

Background and Purpose

The Coast Guard published guidelines on December 31, 1992, to assist groups seeking recertification under the Oil Terminal and Oil Tanker Environmental Oversight and Monitoring Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2732) (the Act) (57 FR 62600). The coast Guard issued a policy statement on July 7, 1993 (58 FR 36505), to clarify the factors that the Coast guard would be considering in making its determination as to whether advisory groups should be certified in accordance with the Act; and the procedures which the coast guard would follow in meeting

its certification responsibilities under the Act.

The Coast Guard has received an application for recertification of PWSRCAC, the currently certified advisory group for the Prince William Sound region. In accordance with the review and certification process contained in the policy statement, the Coast Guard announces the availability of that application.

At the conclusion of the comment period, the Coast Guard will review all application materials and comments received and will take one of the following actions:

(a) Recertify the advisory group under 33 U.S.C. 2732(o).

(b) Issue a conditional recertification for a period of 90 days, with a statement of any discrepancies which must be corrected to qualify for recertification for the remainder of the year.

(c) Deny recertification of the advisory group if the Coast Guard finds that the group is not broadly representative of the interests and communities in the area or is not adequately fostering the goals and purposes of the Act.

The Coast Guard will notify PWSRCAC by letter of the action taken on its application. A notice will be published in the **Federal Register** to advise the public of the Coast Guard's determination.

Dated: July 29, 1998.

R.C. North,

Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard, Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection.

[FR Doc. 98-21188 Filed 8-6-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-15-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Coast Guard**

[USCG 1998-4273]

Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee**AGENCY:** Coast Guard, DOT.**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee (MERPAC) and its working groups will meet to discuss various issues relating to the training and fitness of merchant marine personnel. MERPAC advises the Secretary of Transportation on matters relating to the training, qualifications, licensing, certification and fitness of seamen serving in the U.S. merchant marine. All meetings will be open to the public.

DATES: MERPAC will meet on Wednesday, September 2, 1998, from 8

a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Thursday, September 3, 1998, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. These meetings may adjourn early if all business is finished. Written material and requests make oral presentations should reach the Coast Guard on or before August 19, 1998. Requests to have a copy of your material distributed to each member of the committee or subcommittee should reach the Coast Guard on or before August 19, 1998.

ADDRESSES: MERPAC will meet on both days at the Calhoon MEBA School, 27050 St. Michael's Road, Easton, MD 21601. Send written material and requests to make oral presentations to Commander Steven J. Boyle, Commandant (G-MSO-1), U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2100 Second Street SW., Washington, DC 20593-0001. This notice is available on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For questions on this notice, contact Commander Steven J. Boyle, Executive Director of MERPAC, or Mr. Mark C. Gould, Assistant to the Executive Director, telephone 202-267-0229, fax 202-267-4570, or e-mail mgould@comdt.uscg.mil. For questions on viewing or submitting material to the docket, contact Dorothy Walker, Chief, Dockets, Department of Transportation, 202-366-9329.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice of these meetings is given under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. 2.

Agenda of September 2, 1998, Meeting

The full committee will meet to discuss the objectives for the meeting. The committee will then break up into the following working groups: the working group on the International Convention on the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW); the working group on the National Maritime Center/Licensing Re-Engineering Team; and the working group on the Assessment of Proficiencies as Mandated by the Amended 1995 STCW Convention. At the end of the day, the working groups will make a report to the full committee on what has been accomplished in their meetings. No action will be taken on these reports on this date.

Agenda of September 3, 1998, Meeting

Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee (MERPAC)

The agenda includes the following:

- (1) Introduction.
- (2) Working Group Reports.
- (3) Other items to be discussed:
 - (a) Standing Committee—Prevention Through People

- (a) STCW developments
- (b) Outcome of committee's recommendations to USCG on one person bridge watchstanding proposal
- (c) Report from NMC on changes in licensing requirements for Offshore Supply Vessels
- (d) Other items brought up for discussion by the committee or the public

Procedural

Both meetings are open to the public. Please note that the meetings may adjourn early if all business is finished. At the Chair's discretion, members of the public may make oral presentations during the meetings. If you would like to make an oral presentation at a meeting, please notify the Executive Director no later than August 19, 1998. Written material for distribution at a meeting should also reach the Coast Guard no later than August 19, 1998. If you would like a copy of your material distributed to each member of the committee or subcommittee in advance of a meeting, please submit 25 copies to the Executive Director no later than August 19, 1998.

Information on Services for Individuals With Disabilities

For information on facilities or services for individuals with disabilities or to request special assistance at the meetings, contact the Executive Director as soon as possible.

Dated: July 29, 1998.

Joseph J. Angelo,

Director of Standards, Marine Safety and Environmental Protection.

[FR Doc. 98-21189 Filed 8-6-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-15-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties, TX

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared for a proposed transportation project in Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. John Mack, P.E., Federal Highway Administration, Texas Division, 300 East 8th Street, Room 826, Austin, Texas 78701, Telephone (512) 916-5516.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Grand Parkway Association, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to upgrade the existing road network in Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties. A major investment study is underway to evaluate various modal options between U.S. 59 (S) and SH 288. The proposed action will occur within a corridor in Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties. The majority of this corridor crosses relatively undeveloped properties in Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties. Cities and towns in the region include, Sugar Land, Richmond, Rosenberg, Missouri City, Thompsons and Iowa Colony.

The Grand Parkway Association proposes to build a facility to provide improved transportation characteristics in the region, including improvement to the evacuation routes from coastal areas in Harris, Galveston, and Brazoria Counties.

Several alignment alternatives will be discussed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS will also include evaluation of the no action alternative. Alignment alternatives through and near urban areas as well as alignments through farmland will be evaluated in the DEIS.

Impacts caused by the construction and operation of the facility will vary according to the alternative alignment utilized. Generally, impacts would include the following: transportation impacts (construction detours, construction traffic, mobility improvement and evacuation route improvement), air and noise impacts from construction equipment and operation of the facility, water quality impacts from construction area and roadway storm water runoff, impacts to waters of the United States including wetlands from right of way encroachment, and impacts to residents and businesses based on potential displacements.

Letters describing the proposed action soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. A public scoping meeting will be held at August 20, 1998 at the George Ranch Historical Park, 5 miles south of US 59 on FM 762 in Guy Hall at 7:00 P.M. Public comments on the proposed action and alternatives will be requested. This will be the first of a series of meetings to evaluate alternatives, corridor alternatives and design alternative alignments. A public hearing will be held at a later time, with